

## MAKING THE CASE: HOW TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS

- Arm yourself with data and resources to support your case.
- Find others to help you make the case (if you don't find others at your school—look for community members who might want to team up with you-- such as parents, dietitians, physicians, dentists, or nurses.
- Ask to be on the agenda for the Wellness, Team Nutrition or Coordinated School Health team and present the need for changes.
- Bring in an expert on obesity prevention to make the case for change at school board meetings, meetings of parents, and to meetings of school staff.

### Finding others to help you make the case

Sometimes it seems like you are the only one who recognizes that something needs to be done. How do you find others who also think things need to change? You can ask people via a survey. Another way is to ask people individually, a third way would be to invite people to come to a meeting and see who comes.

- Health teachers, PE teachers, and Family and Consumer Science teachers are often supportive of making changes.
- School nurses are often interested in working to improve the nutrition and physical activity environment.
- School food service personnel often want to make changes, but need additional support from others to get it accomplished.
- Some teachers, principals, superintendents, school counselors, and support staff are eager to help create a better environment—you won't know until you ask them.

### Data and resources to use to support your case

- Changing the Scene <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/hsne.html>
  - PowerPoint slides are available to make the case for change.
  - A video, *The Missing Curriculum—How Schools Can Influence How Our Children Eat* can be shown to parents, school boards, etc.
  - A brochure *Helping Students Learn to Eat Healthy* can be given to those you want to influence.
- Making It Happen <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/hsne.html>
  - Success stories from other places can be used to show that change is possible.
- SD Height and Weight Report <http://doh.sd.gov/SchoolWeight>
- The Institute of Medicine's research based recommendations in their book, *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance* can be shared with those you want to support the change. [www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/5867/22596.aspx](http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/5867/22596.aspx)
- Contact our office if you need data from other sources.

## Decide what data and approach will be most influential

- Determine which facts and statistics will influence your audience
  - Would knowing that our country will face increasingly larger and larger expenses for medical care for those with obesity related diseases motivate your audience to take preventive action?
  - Does your audience care about academic achievement—so that they would be interested in creating a healthier nutrition and physical activity environment?
  - Do they care about the students' long term health prospects—so that it would motivate them to make sure students are taught the knowledge needed to make wise choices and that the school is not selling foods and beverages that undermine students' health?
  - Would they be worried about loss of revenue from making changes? If so, the Making It Happen book is a great resource to show how schools made money selling healthy items.
- Once you have decided what will influence your audience, find statistics and data to back up your suggestions for change.

## Once you have made the case that there is a problem — make the case that something needs to be done

Use data to support what you want to do

- If you want to add a salad bar;
- Research shows:
  - Offering a wider range of healthful items can be an effective way to promote healthful food choices among high school students.
    - Preventing Childhood Obesity---Institute of Medicine 2005
- To gain support for eliminating high fat, high sugar a la carte items;
- Research shows:
  - Many students choose higher fat and higher sugar items when given the choice.
  - Fruit and vegetable consumption was lower at schools where a la carte items were available compared to schools where a la carte items were not available.
    - Preventing Childhood Obesity---Institute of Medicine 2005
- To encourage improving the entire school nutrition environment;
- Research shows:
  - Students choices are influenced by total food environment, so simply offering healthy fruits and vegetables may not be enough to prompt students to purchase them when other foods of high palatability (often high fat or high sugar items) are easily accessible especially those that are highly marketed to children and youth.
  - Schools should provide a consistent environment that is conducive to healthful eating behaviors and regular physical activity.
    - Preventing Childhood Obesity---Institute of Medicine 2005